

# **MSC TRAINING INFORMATION BULLETIN 1-01**

**STCW Rating Forming Part of a  
Navigational Watch**

**Revision One**



**February 2003**

**Prepared by: APMC Training**

## STCW Rating Forming Part of a Navigational Watch (Table A-II/4 of the STCW Code)

**Note: Training Info Bulletin 1-01 is amended and updated by  
Revision One of February 2003**

### Introduction

The Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) 1995 requires that mariners who are part of a navigational watch be trained and assessed in their competencies to perform their duties and that they hold an STCW form endorsed as a Rating Forming Part of a Navigational Watch (RFPNW). Until the mariner is in possession of the STCW endorsement, he or she may not be assigned navigational watchstanding duties except in an observer or supervised training status (i.e., an extra member of the watch). One exception to this rule is if the mariner completes a special training program, then he/she may be used as a lookout without additional supervision, but would still require supervision at the helm.

For the mariners, this means additional training and time accounting requirements.

### Application

The regulation applies to mariners serving on seagoing vessels of 200 or more gross registered tons (GRT - domestic tonnage), 500 International Tonnage Convention gross tons (ITC GT). It has been determined that the responsibilities of an able bodied seaman (AB) are such that the STCW's standards apply to them. In addition, ordinary seamen who stand navigational watches as part of a navigational watch, such as a lookout, must also meet the STCW's standards for certification.

***It is MSC policy that all OS and AB crew (day worker or watch) have the RFPNW endorsement to allow for assignment to any OS or AB position.***

### Methods to Acquire the RFPNW Endorsement

There are two methods to get a STCW Rating Forming Part of a Navigational Watch endorsement.

The first requires:

- Six months of approved (by the United States Coast Guard (USCG)) sea going service that includes training and experience; and
- the candidate must meet the standard of competence in Table A-II/4.

The second is:

- Two months of approved sea going service that includes training and experience; and
- the candidate must meet the standard of competence in Table A-II/4; and,
- special training, either pre-sea or on board ship, which must be approved by the USCG.

The most important element of the first bullet in each section above is that for the purposes of this endorsement, the USCG is counting days as "...an eight-hour day under training carrying out the duties associated with navigational watchkeeping functions...". This means that days in port or days not assigned watch (e.g., doing day work), sea going service credit will not be received for those days

The second bullet in both methods requires the candidate to meet the standard of competence by successfully demonstrating their skills to a ship's officer who is an approved assessor. The candidate must submit evidence that says he or she has passed the practical demonstration of skill in the competencies of the table.

The main requirement of an approved program that requires the shortest amount of experience and shipboard training is the mariner's attendance at an approved pre-sea or onboard special training course. The program must have a minimum of two months of approved sea going service that describes the training, assessment and the performance of watchstanding duties under supervision.

### **MSC Training Program**

As previously noted, navigational watchstanding mariners are required to be RFPNW endorsed. In the two or six month periods of experience and shipboard training, the candidate is an "extra" member of the watch. It is MSC's desire to minimize the numbers of extra personnel and to have them qualify for the endorsement as soon as feasible. This calls for a special training program.

MSC has an approved RFPNW special training program covering the skills required by STCW Table A-II/4, Rating Forming Part of a Navigational Watch. The course includes 8 hours of formal instruction followed by a minimum of sixty days of shipboard instruction and assessment. The instructors must be USCG approved and will originate from the ranks of the Training Center (TC) and Afloat Training Team (ATT) Damage Control Officers (DCO).

Once a mariner has completed the course, the USCG may issue to the mariner an interim STCW certification endorsed as "Rating Forming Part of a Navigational Watch – lookout duties only." This interim rating will be valid for one year from the date of issue and may not be renewed. Mariners who hold this rating may serve as lookouts independently, but must be under supervision while completing other sea service requirements and training on watch.

The following knowledge- or understanding-based competencies are assessed through a written multiple-choice examination as part of the special training program. The candidate must achieve a minimum passing grade of 70% in each area of knowledge or understanding within the competency.

- Shipboard terms and definitions related to lookout (reporting sounds, lights and objects);

- Information requirements that contribute to a safe watch;
- Basic environmental procedures that contribute to a safe watch;
- Knowledge of duties and signals needed to operate emergency equipment and apply emergency procedures;
- Knowledge of pyrotechnic distress signals, EPIRBs and SARTs needed to operate emergency equipment and apply emergency procedures, including false alarms and accidental activation.

This practical assessment aboard ship will allow the assessor to evaluate the mariner's competency or lack of competency. The mariner will be required to demonstrate proficiency in:

- Steering the ship and complying with helm orders;
- keeping a proper look out; and
- contributing to a safe watch.

Each candidate will be issued MSC's approved *Rating Forming Part of a Navigation Watch - Work & Record Book*. This book will include the following:

- USCG Policy
- STCW-95 requirements
- MSC's Program outline
- Assessor's Manual
- Candidate's worksheet guides
- Shipboard Practical Assessment Worksheet
- Watchstanding logs
- Master's certification
- Completion instructions

### Sea Time Requirement

The USCG defines sea time as "eight-hour day under training carrying out the duties associated with navigational watchkeeping functions". A simple sea service letter as done in the past will not meet this requirement. Contained in the *Rating forming part of a navigation watch - Work & Record Book* is the Watchstanding logs. The second mate (as required by USCG) will have to sign off on each watch a candidate stands.

For partial watches, any watch of two (2) or more hours is considered a full watch by the USCG. MSC will use the same guidance. Example: For the 8-12 watch, upon arrival with sea watches broken at 1000, this would be considered a full watch. If sea watches are broken at 0900, this would not be considered and counted as a watch towards the RFPNW endorsement.

If the candidate has taken the approved course then only the one-hundred and twenty (120) watches contained in the *Watchstanding Log Book* need to be signed off.

If the candidate has not taken the approved course then the following must be completed:

- The one-hundred and twenty (120) watches contained in the *Work & Record Book*, and
- Two-hundred and forty (240) watches contained in a Sea Time Watchstanding supplemental log book (provided by MSC).

This represents a total of 360 watches (equivalent to 6 months of watches; two watches per day).

### **Physical/Medical Requirements**

A candidate in this program must be in current compliance with MSC physical schedules and must be in compliance with 46CFR Subpart 12.05 as regards to eye sight, color vision, and hearing.

### **Shipboard Instructors & Assessors**

1. Instructors for shipboard on-the-job training: No special training requirements. The personnel serving in these functions are the ships' officers.
2. Assessors for shipboard practical assessments: Ships' officers - MSC will utilize ships' officers to conduct the shipboard assessment and they are required to have guidance. The guidance consists of how to conduct an assessment, conditions under which the assessment can be conducted, how to explain to the candidate what is expected of him or her, and how to use the assessment criteria in evaluating the practical demonstration. This is in the form of written directions to the ship's officers (a manual is provided in the *Rating Forming Part of a Navigation Watch - Work & Record Book*).

For MSC, the assessor will:

- Be a licensed deck officer holding a license and serving as the ship's second mate or higher; and
- have received the required approved guidance in conducting assessments

### **Shipboard Practical Assessments**

Practical shipboard assessments are required regardless of whether the mariner completed the special training program. The mariner will complete either a minimum of two or six months at sea as an observer/trainee, with the "final" exam being the assessment by a shipboard assessor. Assessments will be conducted over a period of time as the candidate becomes competent in the various tasks.

All the information needed by the candidate and the assessor is located in the *Rating Forming Part of a Navigation Watch - Work & Record Book*. All italicized items listed below are contained in the *Work & Record Book*.

A typical shipboard assessment sequence is:

- a. The candidate would prepare for the assessment by using the *Candidate's Worksheet Guides*.
- b. The assessor (ship's officer; 2/M or higher) would prepare for the assessment by reviewing the *Assessor's Manual* and the *Shipboard Practical Assessment Worksheet*
- c. The Assessor would provide instructions to the candidate
- d. The assessment would be conducted and the assessor observes the candidate's performance
- e. The ship's officer would debrief the candidate and sign off the *Shipboard Practical Assessment*. By signing, the assessing officer attests that he/she has witnessed the actual demonstration(s) of the competency by the mariner and that the mariner has adequately demonstrated the competency. If the mariner did not satisfactorily complete all elements of the assessment, the assessor will discuss with the mariner those areas where improvement is needed and develop a plan leading toward reassessment.

### Completion Requirements

The following information in the *Rating Forming Part of a Navigation Watch - Work & Record Book* needs to be complete:

- Certified copy of a Rating Forming Part of a Navigation Watch Course Certificate
- Two months (120 watches) of bridge watch time as recorded in the *Watchstanding Log Book*
- All twenty-one (21) *Shipboard Practical Assessment Worksheets* completed and signed
- The Master's certification (this states the *Rating Forming Part of a Navigation Watch - Work & Record Book* is complete and ready to be turned in for approval to the APMC)
- Application for Merchant Mariner Document (MMD), License, or Certificate of Registry (Form CG-719B)
- Two passport sized photos
- Certified copies of STCW Basic Safety Training course certificates
- Copy (front and back) of mariner's MMD
- Authorization to release information

The ship and mariner will send the *Rating Forming Part of a Navigation Watch - Work & Record Book* along with any additional required documentation to the Training Division of the APMC. Instructions on additional documentation will be provided in the *Work & Record book*. It is recommended that a certified copy of the *Shipboard Practical Assessment Worksheets* and the *Watchstanding Log Book* be retained by the mariner in the event the originals get lost.

If the candidate did not complete the one day approved class, then in addition to the *Rating Forming Part of a Navigation Watch - Work & Record Book*, proof of four additional months (240 watches) of sea time is required. This will be contained in the *Supplemental Sea Time Watchstanding Log Book* and must be submitted to the APMC as well.

MSC (APMC) will issue a certificate of completion of the required training and sea service for the RFPNW endorsement to the mariner and send a certified copy along with the additional documentation to the USCG REC requesting the RFPNW endorsement on the STCW 95 certificate. The original certificate will be sent to the individual mariner.

If all is in order, the USCG REC will issue the STCW Certificate containing the RFPNW endorsement.

### **Additional Information on the USCG Requirements**

Check with the local USCG Regional Examination Center. Another source is the USCG Internet site:

<http://www.uscg.mil/STCW/m-pers.htm>

Your APMC Point of Contact for STCW Rating Forming Part of a Navigational Watch is Jerry Abrams, [gerald.abrams@msceast.navy.mil](mailto:gerald.abrams@msceast.navy.mil), (757) 417-4230, DSN 537-4230. The mailing address is:

MSC Afloat Personnel Management Center  
Attn: Training – RFPNW  
P.O. Box 120  
Virginia Beach, VA 23458-0120